

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 01122 092000Z

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00 AID-05 DHA-02 TRSE-00

IO-13 /070 W

-----092013Z 091049 /45

O R 091843Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2532

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE

SUMMARY: MARCH 14 TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE ON NICARAGUA IS SENSATION-ALISTIC AND CONTAINS INACCURACIES AND UNTRUTHS. EMB BELIEVES IT DIS-SERVES OUR EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE GON TOWARDS INVESTIGATING AND PUTTING END TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. EMB RECOMMENDS DEPT DISSOCIATE USG FROM THIS ARTICLE. END SUMMARY

1. MARCH 14 INTERNATIONAL EDITION OF TIME MAGAZINE CARRIES STORY "SOMOZA'S REIGN OF TERROR" WHICH APPEARS TO BE SELECTIVE PLAGIARISM OF RIDING'S ARTICLE IN NEW YORK TIMES WITH SOME SENSATIONALISTIC OVER-

LAY. ARTICLE CONTAINS A QUOTE FROM TIME CORRESPONDENT BERNARD DIEDER-ICH WHO, AS FAR AS EMB KNOWS, HAS NOT RECENTLY BEEN IN NICARAGUA.

2. THE ARTICLE REFERS TO MASSACRE AT VARRILLA (SIC) AS RIDING RE-

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PAGE 02 MANAGU 01122 092000Z

PORTED BUT ADDS REASON FOR SOLDIERS' ACTION WAS THAT THE CAMPESINOS WERE CHARGED WITH AIDING GUERRILLAS AND MEANS OF EXECUTION WERE SHOOT-

ING, BAYONETING OR STRANGLING. THIS IS INFORMATION BEYOND REPORT GIVEN TO EMBOFF BY CAPUCHIN PRIESTS WHO SURFACED THE ALLEGATION.

3. THE STORY ATTRIBUTES TO THE BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER EVIDENCE THAT

THE MASSACRE INCIDENT WAS NOT UNIQUE. THIS IS NOT TRUE. THE PASTORAL LETTER WAS PREPARED BEFORE MASSACRE REPORTS SURFACED AND MADE NO REFERENCE TO MASSACRES. THE STORY STATES THAT THE BISHOPS BUTTRESSED THEIR CHARGES WITH TESTIMONY FROM RURAL MISSIONARIES. THE PASTORAL LETTER MAKES NO MENTION TESTIMONY FROM RURAL MISSIONARIES.

4. THE STATEMENT IS MADE THAT CAPTURED GUERRILLAS WERE SENTENCED LAST MONTH FOLLOWING QUOTE UNPUBLICIZED UNQUOTE TRIAL. EMB HAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ON EXHAUSTIVE PUBLICITY GIVEN IN ALL LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER MEDIA TO PUBLIC TRIALS OF FSLN PRISONERS.

5. EMB IS UNAWARE OF WHERE DIEDERICH RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT GN'S ORDERS ARE TO CLEAN OUT THE HILLS OR THAT THEY INTEND TO ELIMINATE THE PEASANTS. HOWEVER, THE INFORMATION IS EASILY PROVED FALSE BY PERSONS WHO ARE IN CONTACT WITH CAMPESINOS LIVING IN AREAS WHERE GN PREVIOUSLY CONDUCTED COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS BUT HAVE NOW SHIFTED TO POSTURE OF PASSIVE VIGILANCE.

6. QUOTES FROM LEADING OPPOSITION MEMBER (READ P.J. CHAMORRO) AND AMBASSADOR ARE SAME QUOTES WHICH APPEAR IN RIDING ARTICLE.

7. COMMENT: EMB BELIEVES THAT SENSATIONALISTIC ARTICLES SUCH AS THIS TIME STORY WITH UNVERIFIED ALLEGATIONS PRESENTED AS FACTS AND OUT-RIGHT DISTORTIONS DO NOT SERVE USG INTEREST IN PROMOTING GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY ONLY TEND TO CONVINCE THOSE ACCUSED OF BEING VIOLATORS THAT THEY ARE THE TARGET OF AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO DISCREDIT THEM AND THAT IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHAT THEY DO IN THE FUTURE. IN THE INTEREST OF TRYING TO CONVINCE THE GON, AND IN PARTICULAR THE GN, THAT WE INTEND TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MANAGU 01122 092000Z

BE AS FAIR AS POSSIBLE IN JUDGING THEIR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE ACTIONS WE SUGGEST THAT DEPT PUBLICALLY DISSOCIATE USG FROM THE TIME ARTICLE, ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: THE RECENT TIME ARTICLE ON NICARAGUA APPEARS TO CONTAIN DISTORTIONS, INACCURACIES AND CITES ALLEGATIONS AND RUMORS OF SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AS IF THEY WERE PROVEN FACTS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE RECENT TRIALS OF GUERRILLAS IN MANAGUA WERE NOT UNPUBLICIZED: THEY WERE HELD IN PUBLIC AND RECEIVED THOROUGH LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE.

THE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT SUCH ARTICLES MAKE MORE DIFFICULT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO CONVINCE COUNTRIES THAT OUR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WILL BE OBJECTIVE AND SINCERE AND THAT WE ARE NEITHER MOTIVATED BY POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM NOR INTEND THAT OUR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN BE USED BY POLITICAL OPPORTUNISTS.

OUR CONCERN OVER REPORTED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NICARAGUA IS REAL. IT WAS THIS CONCERN WHICH LED AMBASSADOR THEBERGE TO RECENTLY COMMENT THAT WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE SOME OF THE ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS MAY BE ACCURATE. HOWEVER, IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE TO DESCRIBE ALLEGATIONS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN INVESTIGATED OR OTHERWISE

SUBSTANTIATED AS IF THEY WERE FACTS. WE HOPE THERE WILL BE IMPARTIAL
INVESTIGATION OF THE ALLEGATIONS SO THAT IT WILL BECOME CLEAR
WHETHER THEY ARE TRUE OR RATHER UNFOUNDED RUMORS AS THE GOVERNMENT
OF NICARAGUA CONTENDS.
THEBERGE

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